

105TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# S. 1342

To amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to increase access to quality health care in frontier communities by allowing health clinics and health centers greater medicare flexibility and reimbursement.

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## IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

OCTOBER 29, 1997

Mr. MURKOWSKI (for himself and Mr. THOMAS) introduced the following bill;  
which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Finance

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## A BILL

To amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to increase access to quality health care in frontier communities by allowing health clinics and health centers greater medicare flexibility and reimbursement.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Medicare Frontier  
5 Health Clinic and Center Act of 1997”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

1           (1) Frontier communities face unparalleled geo-  
2           graphic, climatic, and economic barriers to quality  
3           health care.

4           (2) Health clinics and health centers located in  
5           frontier areas do not have the resources or the de-  
6           mand to provide full service inpatient and outpatient  
7           health care.

8           (3) Many requirements under the medicare pro-  
9           gram under title XVIII of the Social Security Act  
10          (42 U.S.C. 1395 et seq.), designed for large subur-  
11          ban and urban facilities, do not account for the  
12          unique conditions of smaller facilities in remote com-  
13          munities.

14          (4) Increasing the ability of health clinics and  
15          health centers to provide health services enables pa-  
16          tients to remain closer to home while receiving those  
17          services, improves the quality of care provided to in-  
18          dividuals, reduces costs, and spurs economic develop-  
19          ment by keeping health care dollars in the local  
20          economy.

1 **SEC. 3. CERTAIN HEALTH CLINICS AND HEALTH CENTERS**  
 2 **PERMITTED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE MEDI-**  
 3 **CARE RURAL HOSPITAL FLEXIBILITY PRO-**  
 4 **GRAM.**

5 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1820(c)(2) of the Social  
 6 Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395i–4(c)(2)) (as amended by  
 7 section 4201(a) of the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 (Pub-  
 8 lic Law 105–33; 111 Stat. 370)) is amended—

9 (1) in subparagraph (A), by striking “subpara-  
 10 graph (B)” and inserting “subparagraphs (B) and  
 11 (C)”;

12 (2) in subparagraph (B)(i) by striking “public  
 13 hospital” and inserting “public hospital (or a health  
 14 clinic or health center if designated under subpara-  
 15 graph (C))”; and

16 (3) by adding at the end the following:

17 “(C) HEALTH CLINICS AND CENTERS.—A  
 18 State may designate a health clinic or a health  
 19 center (as defined by the State) as a critical ac-  
 20 cess hospital if the health clinic or center—

21 “(i) is licensed by the State as a  
 22 health clinic or a health center;

23 “(ii) is located in—

24 “(I) a county (or equivalent area)  
 25 within the State that has an average

1 population of not more than 6 individ-  
2 uals per square mile; and

3 “(II) a health professional short-  
4 age area (as defined in section  
5 332(a)(1)(A) of the Public Health  
6 Service Act); and

7 “(iii) meets the criteria for designa-  
8 tion as a critical access hospital under sub-  
9 paragraph (B), except that clause (i)(II) of  
10 such subparagraph shall be applied by sub-  
11 stituting ‘50-mile’ for ‘35-mile’.”.

12 (b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by  
13 subsection (a) shall take effect as if included in the enact-  
14 ment of the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 (Public Law  
15 105–33; 111 Stat. 251).

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